

EVOLUTION THE CHARACTERISTIC OF NATURE.

BY THE EDITOR.

MR. Walter Sonneberg calls attention in his article to an important truth which is frequently overlooked. It is this, that evolution is not a continuous progress, but only one phase in the circuit of life. It is true that life moves in circles, or rather in spirals, which are advancing circles. But for that reason we can not say that "progress is an illusion." Progress and evolution are true enough, even though they are only one phase of life, and even though they are followed by dissolution and decay.

Some evolutionists have accepted the idea that progress will lead mankind to a state of complete adaptation and will finally end in a sort of millennium when there will be perfect bliss and happiness. This is an error, for happiness is a relative factor. We may express happiness by a fraction, the denominator of which represents our needs while the numerator enumerates the satisfactions attained. Progress increases both factors simultaneously. As the satisfaction that contributes to our happiness increases so does the denominator of our growing wants. New needs arise with every invention, and we are but too quick in becoming accustomed to them. The fact is that life is a function and our happiness a correlated exponent of its motion. Pain and misfortune are caused by disturbances which clamor for a readjustment. Life may grow more and more complicated, but a life from which trouble, anxiety, obstruction, struggle, misfortunes, accidents, pain and other disturbances were absolutely eliminated, is a mere dream; closely considered it is unthinkable and we may count it as an impossibility.

At the same time we do not doubt that all evolutionists of a scientific turn of mind are, and always have been, convinced of the truth that all things that have originated will finally pass away. Solar systems rise into existence and break to pieces. Nothing

endures, and of late we have found evidence that even the chemical atoms will be dissolved again.

We must assume that in the course of eons our whole solar system, the universe in which we live, will be destroyed. On the other hand we know that new universes originate even before the old ones pass away. The heavens are studded with nebulae which astronomy has found out to be worlds in the making. Life is in constant motion. It blooms and withers, it originates and passes away; but while the several forms of life come and go life itself is ever new, and the eternal laws which sway the whole remain forever world without end.

We know that all that lives must die; but we know also that life is always triumphant.

Though all the worlds must break to pieces, growth, evolution, progress, life ever advancing, or whatever we may call it, will remain the characteristic feature of existence. The world runs in one definite direction. It is in a state of perpetual motion, and this motion exhibits the tendency of building up. Portions of it break down again but every breakdown only prepares a new start.

We conclude with a quotation from *De Rerum Natura* (which is here reproduced with some corrections):

“But as the morning wakes the eyes
Whose weariness the evening sealed with sleep;
As new-born spring the doom of winter thwarts
And genial resurgence foils the tomb
With life rejuvenized in serial birth;
As night and day, in alternating layers,
From time unfold: so too the world respire.
The cosmic tides in rhythmic surges rise
Ever to ebb in restless billows back
Where call the soundless Deep; then upward heave
With gathered stress of nobler aspiration.
Thus ever from the grave is life redeemed,
And ruins wake to spheres regenerate,
Gemming the circle of eternity
With threaded universes evermore.”